

LOCAL PODCAST EXAMINES WOMEN WITH IMMIGRANT ROOTS

COUPLE'S ENDEAVOUR SHINES A LIGHT ON CONTRIBUTIONS MADE TO CANADA

BRYAN MYERS
bmyers@metroland.com

A north Halton woman and her husband have used their period of isolation to develop a new set of skills.

Mifrah Abid and her husband, Javed Shaikh, have almost wrapped up the first season of their podcast, "Across Her Table," a series that shines a light on women with immigrant roots and their contributions to Canada.

"Immigrant women, particularly Muslim women, aren't represented enough in mainstream media," Abid said. "It's more than that: they're misrepresented."

Though all of Abid's guests are Muslim women, they're a diverse cross-section, so far, guests have included: CEOs, authors, culi-

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nary experts, and even Milton's own town councillor, Sameera Ali.

"I wanted to tell stories of people contributing in different ways in Canada," Abid said. "I've tried to keep it diverse, not just in terms of profession but ethnicity."

"People think of Muslim women as one homogenous figure," Abid, who moved to Canada two and a half years ago from India,

said. Though the origins of her guests paint a clearer picture, coming to Canada from a range of countries, including: Bangladesh, Egypt, Uzbekistan, Syria and Saudi Arabia.

Before moving to Canada, Abid was a lecturer at the Abeda Inamdar College of Arts, Sciences and Commerce in Pune, India, teaching linguistics and literature, among other classes.

"Our qualifications don't translate to the job market here," she said.

In Canada, Abid volunteered helping refugees and new immigrants while studying to become a licensed ESL trainer.

She'd hoped to enter the job market shortly after receiving her diploma in May, but the pandemic has forced her to postpone her job search.

"My husband said, 'Let's start something creative and see how it goes,'" she said.

While Shaikh works behind the scenes to edit, upload and produce the podcast, Abid is the voice.



Javed Shaikh photo
Mifrah Abid records an episode of the podcast she's put together with her husband.

"Some people built a tree house to pass the time during the lockdown," she said. "We did a podcast."

Surprisingly, Abid admitted she wasn't a regular podcast listener.

"I listen to CBC Radio a lot while driving," she said.

Abid said, even as the host, she aims to give her guests a platform to tell their story.

"We feel that immigrants are close to home for us," she said. "Everybody has a set of struggles, but everyone offers something different."

Having immigrated to Canada two and a half years ago, Abid said her heritage is important to her.

"My kids have a dual identity. A lot of people ask where we're from. As if we don't belong here," Abid said. "Where I'm from enriches my life experience. I identify as Canadian, but part of my story is in India."

Abid said she wants her children to be proud to be the sum of all the places they've lived.

"We call ourselves the 'hyphenated Canadians'," she said.

"Across Her Table" is available on most podcast streaming services including Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, iHeart Radio, and Castbox.

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Q: Do you have any tips on how to tame my dental anxiety?

A: It's a well-known fact in this country that large numbers of people are afraid of going to their dentists. Some people are so afraid that they neglect even the routine examinations and professional cleanings.

It doesn't have to be that way. Here are some tips to help reduce your anxiety. First, see your dentist before treatment is needed. Get to know your dentist and get comfortable discussing your concerns with the dentist and staff. Set your appointments for a stress-free time of day, not on your lunch hour or immediately after work. Second, have the dentist explain the dental treatment to you. Knowledge of the procedure should let you be more relaxed. Third, let your dentist and hygienist know that you're scared. It's nothing to be ashamed of and you're most certainly not their first patient to feel that way. Fourth, understand that times have changed. There are new methods of controlling and eliminating discomfort that weren't available until recently. Don't let dental fears keep you from having a healthy mouth and teeth.